

REVOLUTION

ISSUE 55

socialist youth movement • 30p

phone 07951 493 232

SEASONS' GREETINGS FROM BLAIR:



Low pay for Firefighters & War on Iraq



ANTI-WAR ACTIONS

OCTOBER 31st



SHEFFIELD COMING AT YA!

I am still reeling from the amazing events of the October 31st day of action against the war, when Sheffield students successfully occupied a University building for the first time in over ten years! We had been planning for this Halloween day for nearly a month, but no one really knew what to expect, or had any idea of the numbers that were willing to take part in 'civil disobedience'. As it turned out, the day couldn't have gone more smoothly.

Following a short rally at noon, between 80 and 100 students marched from the Union to a building connected with the engineering department, which receives blood money from arms merchants Boeing in the form of a 'sponsorship for research' agreement. Helped by a couple of Gulf War vets, who had first hand experience of the inhumanity of warfare and who both vehemently opposed any kind of military action on Iraq, we stormed our target, and after a short struggle, security gave up and allowed us the building.

Once inside, the next problem facing us was... what next? We had no means of securing the doors, as someone had forgotten the bike chains (Maoist guerrillas we were not), but security personnel had warmed to our cause and actually sent two cops away from the door, so in effect it made no difference. The atmosphere became more relaxed as people sat down, took stock of the situation, listened to cds, guitar and the mini percussion band, or just talked between themselves.

Despite this chilled atmosphere, no-one lost sight of why we had taken the building, or the terrible consequences facing innocent Iraqi civilians, conscripts and 'allied' soldiers should our actions be in vain. Morale was kept high by constant announcements of similar occupations in Leeds, Cambridge, Liverpool and L.S.E (which culminated in a 2000 strong march!). Speakers such as Yvonne Ridley (journalist captured by the

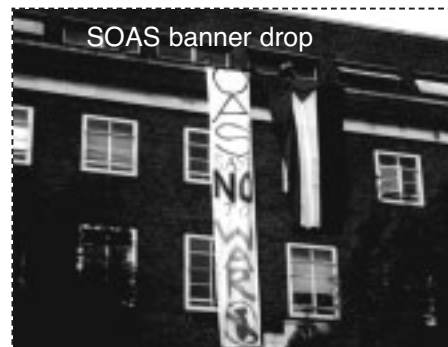
Taliban during the Afghanistan War), and former Vietnam War activist and retired lecturer, Nick Howard, kept us absorbed and focused. Howard summed up the anti-war argument perfectly, saying 'We are being led towards this war with lies - tens of thousands of innocents will be killed.'

The afternoon quickly turned to evening, and a few of us headed to the peace rally outside the town hall to bring news of the occupation to the 500 people gathered there. We also appealed for as many people as possible to come and show their support to the students in the occupation. They didn't need much persuading. An excellent and upbeat samba band lead a march of around 100 people towards the designated anti-war zone that was our building. They arrived to huge cheers from the students.

A music collective called Trouble brought along a sound system and decks, and before long the Sir Henry Stephenson building for Automatic Control and Systems Engineering had become a fully-fledged nightclub. Our self-imposed no alcohol rule went out the window as we relaxed after the events of the day. Security personnel were again quite happy, we even caught one playing air-guitar to a sing-along of Bohemian Rhapsody! Unsurprisingly their bosses weren't, and we were threatened with an injunction the following day. No one cared.

Eventually people started finding places to kip for the night, as the more ironically minded people began a game of risk, the board game for budding imperialist warmongers. Maybe if we gave a copy of the game to Bush, Blair, Putin, Hussein et al their ego-driven dreams of warfare, money and power would be satisfied without the need for the suffering and bloodshed of the innocent people of the world. I won't hold my breath.

The next morning we held a short rally outside the building, enjoying support from an assortment of cars, vans and refuse collectors! At 9am we left our home for the night (parting such sweet sorrow and all that) and marched towards the nerve centre



of the University, Firth Court. We were all a little tired, yet our defiance had not faltered as we announced to those inside that the actions of the previous day and night were just the start. If the war begins, we will take Firth Court, and we will bring the university to a standstill!

We all retired for breakfast and coffee, all elated with our achievements. We wish to thank the speakers, the Stop The War Coalition for calling the day of action, the people of the town and the samba band for their brilliant support, and the security personnel for being such good sports. Hell, even the takeaway for their excellent pizza and free fried chicken for the carnivores.

The resolve, the determination and the sheer strength of the opposition to Bush's war machine displayed by all in the building was so encouraging to witness. Every single one of the students involved was there because they did not want innocent blood shed on the whim of rulers who couldn't care less about anyone below their own privileged class. We will continue our actions, we will increase our militancy as they increase theirs, we will stop this war, and we will force the UN to drop its murderous and crippling sanctions policy. That is our pledge, and we know we stand united with people all over the country and the world who want to see an end to oppression and war. If they attack Iraq, we will fight back. And the people's army will never be defeated.

**BY BUD IN
SHEFFIELD**

Put Uncle Sam in a jam, **DEFEAT IMPERIALISM!**

The US war machine, the US government, has declared openly that its intention is an imperialist war on the Iraqi people. The UN weapon inspectors have gone back into Iraq. Their task; to justify an imperialist war on the Iraqi people. A war for power, for oil and control of the "global village".

Just earlier this year Condoleezza Rice declared that the US administration would not take "yes as an answer". The US government and its lackeys in Britain are set on a path to war. We must oppose them. They are the threat, they are the enemy of humanity, they **MUST** be defeated.

Our leaders, our governments, are playing a dangerous game. On the 28th December 400 000 people marched on the streets of London against war. On 31st October thousands of students across the UK occupied their universities and took direct action against war in the evening. Meanwhile all over the country over 200 protests took place. As the European Social Forum in Florence drew to a close, a million people marched against war.

And what of the people of Iraq who have been mercilessly bombed and battered by ten years of cruel and inhumane sanctions? Will they lie down and except their "liberation"? No, the people of Iraq will defend their country against this imperialist aggression. No one denies that Saddam Hussein is a cruel and evil dictator, but whatever despot the US imposes on the Iraqi people - be it General Tommy Franks or an Iraqi born lackey - let us have no doubt that with the strength and power of the world's only super power behind them, they will be far harder to overthrow than the down trodden Saddam Hussein.

The people of Iraq will fight back. They will fight in the deserts, on the beaches and, should it come to it, on the streets of Baghdad. We must stand in solidarity with their fight, they are our brother and sisters. Let us call for their victory.

There is no doubt that the UN is a puppet of the imperialist forces, proven by its role in wars in Serbia, Somalia and the Middles East. America not confident in its strength and looks at

every other country as a threat to their over arching power. The fact that the weapons inspectors are going in at all is a small victory for the more cautious imperialist powers in Europe. What if the weapons inspectors find no weapons of mass destruction (WMD)? The US and its poodle allies in Westminster will find an excuse for war, but they will lose any vague legitimacy they may have had in the eyes of the people.

The deadline for Saddam to declare his WMD is the 8th December. War could fall shortly afterwards. We must mobilise to stop it now. But, should it happen we must support the Iraqi people in their struggle against the aggression of our own imperialist masters.

A defeat for Iraq is a defeat for workers everywhere. One need only look at the recent example of Afghanistan to see the results of imperialist occupation. Some people have argued that the Afghans were liberated from a tyrannous regime. It may be true that they now enjoy more rights than they did under the Taliban, but they are still under the thumb of the US. What was the first protest under the new regime? It was against the imperialist bombings. Has there been any elections in this new fair and just society? No there has not. 'These people are not ready for democracy,' says America.

We must continue the struggle. For the defeat of imperialism. For a world without imperialism. For Socialism.

BY LUKE IN REIGATE



Czech Revo at anti-NATO protests Nov 21, Prague

BRIGHTON

By Jess on the Beach

The Brighton 'Stop the War' demo took place along with others around the country on October 31st. Students and Critical Mass cyclists gathered outside the library on campus at Sussex University at 3:00pm before marching onto the dual carriageway and stopping traffic. As per usual, proceedings were marred by use of unnecessary force by the riot police who were seen more than once to push people off their bikes. The roads were occupied for about an hour in an attempt to call public attention to the 'Stop the War' campaign.

The later part of the demo started at 5:30pm where ironically enough people gathered outside the war memorial. There were about 300 people in all, made up of students in the 'Stop the War' movement, local Brighton-ers, the Palestine Solidarity campaign, and other interested parties. We moved out in



front of the pier where we occupied a few main roads. The atmosphere was festive, with dancing, music, and fire sticks and poi. Everyone seemed really keen and excited about what we were doing and adamant that the demo should be peaceful. As we all sat down, more and more police arrived, sporadically trying to drag protesters out of the crowd. It seemed ludicrous that while we all shouted for peace, the police seemed determined to antagonise us. Harassed by riot police we started to march, dodging pepper gas on the way. As each time we turned a corner to get back on the major roads we were confronted by lines of riot police, the mood became despondent. We succeeded in blocking access to Brighton train station but on leaving, the police managed to split the demo. When there were only about 30 of us left, the police deemed

us threatening enough to call in the dogs. Then followed a section 14 and a long wait in the cold for release.

Although the demo was good, it was disgusting that a demo calling for peace should have met with so many arrests and such brutal behaviour by the police. The protesters remained peaceful and the arrests appeared entirely unprovoked. In the face of such unnecessary brutality, the 'Stop the War' demos, while they may gain some public sympathy, may also lose people willing to physically commit themselves. And as Britain teeters on the brink of war, maybe that is exactly what the government wants.



OCT 31st ACTIONs continued...



Badgers ...yeah

By THE GREAT
EL SPARKO

On the 31st October, badgers from across the land met in Grovesnor Square (London) to prepare to take the badger homeland back from Starbucks. We suited up in fashionable badger-style head-gear and armed ourselves with hi-tech precision water pistols. We marched onto Oxford Street and stormed the nearest Starbucks with guns blazing and slogans blaring. The land was then proclaimed ours and we set up an illegal *sett*-lement (badgers...sets...I don't get it either) in the name of the Bible Badger, the Cub and the Almighty Dollar. Cardboard houses were erected to house our badger people. Fully trained professional badger soldiers armed to the teeth set up a roadblock at the entrance to the settlement to protect the good badgers within from evil terrorists only seeking their quick fix of coffee and threatening badger security. Innocent children were also shot at just 'cos we felt like it.

to protect the property of the people and, though dozens of them were slaughtered in the struggle, the people managed to successfully evict the oppressive badger regime.

Not deterred by the obvious lack of support from the people, the badgers marched onwards to our next proclaimed Promised Land further down Oxford Street. (They didn't need to walk far). We forced our way inside and informed the inhabitants they were under siege. This was quickly confirmed by the management who locked the gates to the coffee city. Our soldiers were barricaded in by militant forces. They took this as a direct threat to the security of free-world democracy and used "appropriate force". They eventually fought their way out. After this obvious display of terrorism by the people of Starbucks it has been decided by the badger-in-chief that a ten metre high concrete wall will be erected to surround all Starbucks in order to protect the good badgers. (For all those unaware of the badger thing, the action was against the illegal Israeli settlements in Palestine and the oppression of the Palestinian people by the Israeli regime. These illegal settlements are supported by the CEO of Starbucks, Howard Schultz.)

Israel's Berlin Wall: BIGGER, LONGER AND UN-DECONSTRUCTION

Israel has a cunning plan: to build a wall that will surround and isolate the Palestinians. It is the construction of a new apartheid. This wall will enclose the Palestinians living in the West Bank, cutting them off from the rest of the world even more so than they are now, effectively forcing them to live in a huge prison.

The wall is already under construction using cheap Palestinian labour. It is 8 meters high, 30-100 m wide and 350 km long. The Great Wall of the Green Line. But the big 'scam' is that it doesn't follow the Green Line (the 1967 border that separates Israel from Palestinian areas). This wall will take 10% more of the West Bank than Israel has already. It will trap 11,000 Palestinians (11 villages) between the west side of the wall and Israel, setting up the perfect scenario for permanent 'transfer' of these Palestinians to the West Bank. This means pushing people off their land without compensation and re-housing them in refugee camps.

Qalqilya, a village that sits on the Green Line just north of Ramallah, will be all but surrounded by the wall. There will be only one entrance/exit that will be controlled by Israeli troops. At any given moment, the Israeli military machine can close the gateway, lay siege to the village and lock down the inhabitants of Qalqilya.

Already Palestinian people suffer under full occupation. Nablus, another city in the West Bank, has not had one full day when curfew has been lifted since June 21st. Not one day when the people can move about freely to seek medical help, get food for their family or go to school. Already over 2,038 Palestinians have died due to the Occupation - this is an average of 3 people per day.

END THE OCCUPATION! Support the Palestinian struggle for freedom!

by Yoj in elephant and castle



israeli trade fair action

by lima
from north
london

On the morning of December 1st, a group of activists mainly from the organisation ISM (International Solidarity Movement) gathered outside the entrance to the Alexandra Palace at approximately 11am. They were there to protest non-violently and symbolise the closed military zones that Palestinians are forced to live in. Their secondary objective was to raise awareness of the "boycott of Israeli goods" campaign. Despite the wet weather conditions the activists dressed in an army style, camouflaged and khaki clothing, some were armed with water pistols, and all were very upbeat. They handed out leaflets and the speakers quoting Archbishop Desmond Tutu on his distressing visit to the Holy Land.

As the ism activists talked with the people heading towards the trade fair, some of them met with verbal abuse, while others were able to discuss their opinions on the situation in Palestine. The ever-present police set up a pen that was reconfigured by the activists as a prop checkpoint complete with camouflage netting. check out the ism at www.ism-london.org.

BOWLING FOR COLUMBINE

Erik Harris and Dylan Klebold were the two boys who took their guns loaded with K-Mart ammunition and killed twelve students at Columbine High School, Littleton, Colorado, before shooting themselves. What were they doing the morning of the shootings? Bowling. Bowling was never seen by the frenzied US media as an influence on the two boys. Instead Marilyn Manson*, video games and violent movies were blamed. Yet teenagers in Japan, Canada, the UK, in fact all over the western world, listen to Marilyn Manson, watch violent films and play video games – but DON'T shoot each other.

This is one of many ironic observations in Michael Moore's excellent documentary, *Bowling For Columbine*. In the film we follow him through out the USA and Canada in his quest to understand what makes the United States such a violent gun loving society. We see him meeting victims of shootings, talking to members of the pro-gun lobby (including a startling interview with racist National Rifle

Association 'ambassador', Charlton Heston) and trying to unearth what lies behind the incredible number of fatal shootings in the US.

The most obvious answer drawn is the ease at which fire arms and ammunition can be

moments is when Moore, along with two of the victims of the Columbine massacre who have K-

Mart bullets permanently imbedded in their bodies, buy up bag loads of K-Mart ammunition and then present their 'shopping'

to the K-Mart director. With the pressure of the media on them, K-Mart agreed that the stocking of all ammunition would be phased out within the following ninety days.



purchased. In the film's opening shot we see Moore opening a bank account and being handed a rifle as his free gift (I am not joking). In another scene, we see Moore buying bullets whilst having a trim at the barbers. Through these humorous vignettes of real life America, Moore makes a serious point about the country's ridiculous gun control (or lack of control) laws. One of the film's most victorious

Fear Nation

Moore goes beyond the idea of simply taking the guns away from the people. He asks why Canada, a country of thirty million with seven million gun owners, has an annual total of 168 gun killings in comparison to the US's eleven thousand plus. In exploring this question, Moore exposes the hypocrisy, corruption and

racism that lies at the heart

of American society. He places emphasis on the US media, particularly the sensationalist TV news that whips the nation up into a state of frenzied fear. It is not wise to give out a load of guns to such a fear-incensed group of people, Moore concludes!

He also draws our attention to the mass poverty, hidden by the media, and to a government so obsessed with the so-called 'war on terror' that the eradication of poverty and racism does not even grace its agenda. This is illustrated most clearly when Moore visits his home town of Flint, Michigan; a town racked with unemployment and hardship in which a six year old boy took his uncle's gun to school and killed a classmate. The boy's mother had been forced to take part in a 'welfare to work' programme, travelling sixty miles a day to work seventy hours a week and still unable to feed and clothe her family. (What is really sick is that the same company that makes weapons of mass destruction in Littleton, Colorado is the same company that runs the welfare-to-work programme in Flint, Michigan – LOCKHEED MARTIN – remember that name.)

Moore's travels across the continent are intercepted with sharp facts and figures, film clips and a pumping soundtrack. Moore never makes assumptions about his viewers. This is one of the documentary's greatest strengths and hopefully will enable it to reach a wide audience, thus swaying public opinion and exposing some truth about the United States of America.

BY MIRIAM IN HACKNEY



*Footnote: Marilyn Manson cancelled the last 4 gigs of their tour in sympathy with the victims of the Columbine massacre.

Charlton Heston and the NRA roadshow refused to cancel their pro-gun rally in Denver directly after the Columbine tragedy and actually made an unexpected visit to Flint after 6 yr old Kayla was shot. 'From my cold dead hands.' Heston's favourite line.

QUOTES that you will never forget

'If you're not armed, you're not responsible. It's your job to protect yourself. Cut out the middleman – the police – and protect yourself. It's your duty as an American to protect yourself.' **The Michigan Militia**

'I use the pen. You know, the pen is mightier than the sword. But you must have a sword by your side just in case the pen doesn't work.' **James Nichols, Michigan Militia and friend of Tim McVeigh, the Oklahoma City bomber, who sleeps with a loaded 44 magnum under his pillow (and i'm not talking about the ice cream)**

'Thank you for not shooting me.' **Michael Moore as he leaves a Canadian's home**



check out moore's new book **Stupid White Men**. it's a great read for the whole family!

30K is
FAIR PAY

FIRE

What are the demands?

Currently a firefighter gets £21,531 for a 42 hour week. The FBU tabled a claim for a 40% increase. This would bring the average wage for a firefighter to £30,000 per year which works out at £8.50 an hour after tax.

How did the strike develop?

The Local Government Association (who employ the firefighters) were prepared to offer 16% in the summer but this was blocked by John Prescott. The Government ignored the FBU claim until the union had achieved an 87.1% YES vote in favour of strike action. The FBU cancelled the first two 48 hour strikes so talks could continue but the Government took this as a sign of weakness and hardened their stance, latching onto the Bain review which recommends job cuts.

Just before the first eight day strike was due to begin, the employers again tabled 16%, with 4% this year and the rest conditional on talks about "modernisation". But John Prescott wanted his kip, so again the deal was blocked, triggering the second strike.

The War of Words

One predictable outcome during this strike has been the reaction of the media, particularly the right wing press who have lined up to smear the firefighters and their union in the hope of turning public opinion against them. The Sun denounced two FBU officials who criticised sanctions on Iraq as "Saddam's

Stooges". The Daily Mail accused firefighters of putting British soldiers at risk because they were having to provide cover for the strike while they should have been training for a war on Iraq.

What has been illuminating is the stance of the so-called liberal media such as the Guardian and the Independent. Both papers have taken a stance against the FBU's pay claim, parroting the Government's line that it is excessive and would cause inflation. Hugo Young, chair of the Scott Trust (who own the Guardian and the Observer) wrote on 26th Nov 'Why we must not give the firefighters what they want'. He claimed that the strike was not a pay dispute but a "nakedly political attempt to re-establish trade union power" and calls the FBU "an enemy of political order and economic truth".

Columnist Polly Toynbee blames the FBU for the strike saying that they are leading their members into dispute instead of doing business the "John Monks way" which leads to "win-win deals". If she had checked her facts she might see some of the derisory deals that public sector workers have been given over the past few years. If she had ever been to a firestation picket line, she would see how popular Andy Gilchrist remains among rank and file firefighters.

What does this demonstrate? It shows the liberal media's true colours. In times of class

antagonism, when the working class shows its militancy and its potential, the liberal media will take the side of the ruling classes, and advocate "talk don't walk".

Is there really no money?

The Government's mantra is "There is no money" and giving the firefighters even 16% would trigger interest rate rises, inflation and risk huge job losses across the economy, as well as taking money from nurses and other public sector workers. This line has been parroted faithfully by Labour ministers, the bosses' club the CBI, and Bank of England Governor, Eddie George.

This is nonsense.

Gordon Brown revealed last week that the Government has set aside a fund of £1 billion for Bush's war for oil. Many analysts think a war would cost even more. Last year executive pay rose by 17%, which is surely inflationary. Jean-Pierre Garnier, Chief Executive of pharmaceutical giant GlaxoSmithKline has asked for a £15 million package of cash and share options claiming he was having trouble getting motivated for £10 million a year! His demand comes as GlaxoSmithKline's share price has fallen by 30% in the last two and a half years and its profits fell last year by 25% (lucky for him that executives don't have performance related pay). The CBI refused to condemn this as excessive yet they call firemen greedy for asking for £8.50 an hour.

REVO ACTION ROUNDUP IN SUPPORT OF THE FBU STRIKES

The Brixton banner drop was the conclusion of a very successful day of direct action in conjunction with the firefighters. Here is our story. Myself and a fellow comrade waited on the platform for a nearing train to pass, however we should have known better than to rely on London transport. We decided - after a few minutes of waiting for a passing train that didn't pass - to just make our way to the banner drop point. We made our way gingerly on the side of the tracks, keeping in mind that a train could pass at any moment. When we reached the middle of the bridge that over looks Brixton High Road, we started securing the banner. As soon as we got the first knot tied, low and behold the train we'd been waiting for forever was rollercoasting its way down the track. Luckily we had significant room to manoeuvre ourselves clear of getting hit or injured. After the train had passed we continued to finish securing the banner, and then made our way back towards the platform. Just as we reached it, we were faced with an oncoming euro star train, which pretty much zoomed by. We got out of the station, walked around for a while, and then met up with our other comrades who were out getting petitions, collecting donations, etc. with the firemen.

BY LINA, THE INCREDIBLE BANNER DROPPER



Before AND After...



FIGHTERS

It comes down to a question of priorities. Blair can find money for cuts in corporation tax and for America's war to seize Iraq's oilfields but cannot find £250 million to give the firefighters a decent living wage. Government has poured around £400 million down the drain on consultants and lawyers preparing the part privatisation of the London Tube - money which would surely have been better spent on investment in public transport.

Scourge of low pay

"A victory for the firefighters would lead to every public sector union demanding the same" said Blair. Yes, we agree but we think this is a good thing. Workers held off demands during Labour's first term hoping things would get better but saw only cuts in corporation tax, single parent benefit and introduction of tuition fees for students. A victory for the firefighters would give a huge boost not only to all public sector workers but also to low paid private sector workers, and spread the idea that workers should fight against poverty wages in the world's 4th largest economy. Even more dangerous for Blair is the idea that strikes actually work as a way of winning more pay and against attacks on working conditions brought about by New Labour's privatisation agenda.

For "modernisation" - read cutbacks

Prescott revealed the Government's real "modernisation" agenda this week. They are proposing:

- ➔ cuts of up to 11,000 firefighters;
- ➔ closure of stations at night (even though

more people die from night time fires);
➔ end to overtime ban - meaning fewer firefighters doing more work;
➔ making firefighters double as paramedics thereby masking shortages in the ambulance service and allowing cuts in both areas.

A report in the Observer on 1 Dec claimed that Blair is planning to make these cuts to the fire service by new laws anyways.

Where are the other unions?

Despite the TUC General Council agreeing to back the FBU action, trade union leaders have been conspicuous by their absence until recently. It was only toward the end of the eight day strike that they chose to support the FBU in public and criticised the Government. The danger now is that the TUC will try to broker a deal which will sell the firefighters short. We cannot rely on the same union bureaucrats who sold out the Liverpool dockers.

The firefighters cannot win on their own. Moral support is all well and good but they need the practical support of other rank and file workers in the form of donations and solidarity strikes. Anti-union laws make secondary action (sympathy strikes) illegal but these are essential if the FBU are to win.

Simultaneous strikes by firefighters, tube workers, airport staff, teachers, council workers would send a clear message to New Labour that **workers united cannot be defeated.**



BACKLASH:

can the government take the heat?

What can we do?

- ☆ Invite a firefighter to your college, school or workplace to speak about the strike.
- ☆ Donate money and help fundraise for the strike fund
- ☆ Join the local firefighters' support group.
- ☆ Go to your local firestation and show your support.

by YUEN in
Lewisham

The firefighters are getting a lot of support in college from students and teachers. We've now collected over 85 signatures on a petition in support of the firefighters. Its ideal that the local fire station is right next door to the college (well bout 200m away) meaning its well easy to drop petitions off and show solidarity.

We've now arranged a meeting next Tuesday which is broadly going to be a practical one for all the students going to the NUS protest on the 4th December and also about showing solidarity with the Firefighters and bringing the struggles closer together. I've asked the local firefighters to send someone down to talk about solidarity against Tony Blair and their experience of the strike and the plans for the next strike in December, they've said they'd be more than happy to send a firefighter. I'm also going to get the chair of the Reigate College NUT (he's a hardcore militant... calling for a public sector general strike!) to speak at the meeting.

It's a shame that the meeting isn't actually during the strike itself, but this way we've got a chance to make it bigger.

by LUKE in REIGATE

About 10 of us and three firefighters took to the streets of Brixton chanting "Blair Blair hear us say, 30K is fair pay." All the way to the Brixton tube, we got cheers and active solidarity. At the tube, we set up a line of petitioners and bucket shakers. The response from the public was amazing. We raised about £250 in 2 hours.

We got on the megaphone and started explaining what this meant for the community, all the low paid public sector workers and what the real aims of the government were. We talked about how the government could spend billions on a war bombing thousands of innocent people in Iraq, but couldn't 'find' enough money to pay the firefighters (who save lives instead of killing people) a living wage. We also pointed out that Two Jags Prescott gave himself and other ministers a 40% pay rise last year.

After Saturday's excellent efforts, Revo members raised another £55 on Sunday at the weekly Camden Revo sale. 5 of us got the last tube up to Kentish Town fire station and dropped off the money we raised. The best bit was we ended up taking politics with the firemen (no women on that particular watch) till 1:30am. Everything from why a revolution is necessary, the issue of asylum seekers and how we thought the FBU could defeat Blair and score a victory for low paid workers all over Britain. We had an excellent debate with the fire fighters and if we didn't all have to be a work or college we'd probably have stayed the night.

by justin in kingsland

THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL FORUM FLORENCE

ONE MILLION PEOPLE ON THE STREETS OF FLORENCE PROTESTING AGAINST THE WAR!!!!!!

hey all you revolutionaries out there!!!

we're back from the european social forum in florence and were blown away by the number of young radical people that participated. there was over 60,000 people at the forum - triple the amount the organisers expected. so much so that they actually ran out of delegates cards! activists from all across europe and beyond: spanish, french, german, czech, austrian, belgian, mexican, indian, argentinian, american, and of course, italian. and these were just the ones i met! it was brilliant. there were over 500 workshops, seminars and conferences held over the 2.5 days. plus the disobedientes organised another space called the hub where they planned actions: one against a us airforce base and one in defence of a community whose landowner was trying to sell off their land. the week was intense, but so exciting! people were discussing ideas of socialism, communism, anarchism and the way forward for the movement. the revolutionary spirit increased throughout the week.

but the crowning moment was the last day when over 1 million people marched through florence demonstrating against the war! "Contra Blair, contra Bush, contra Berlusconi" got the most applause as people came out of their houses to cheer us on. it was electric! the day before the UN security council had passed

the resolution allowing the US free reign to invade after one month. this gave the anti-war movement a big impetus to get as many people on the streets as possible. we were close to the front of the demo and were trying out our new anti-war songs to the tune of 'i will survive' and 'we all live in a terrorist regime (yellow submarine)'. the demo continued for over 4 hours after we had finished at the stadium. brilliant.

but one day of action is not enough and we argued this in a meeting with other activists @ the stadium. we put forward an action plan:

Starting with a Europe wide day of action against the war on Dec 7th, 2002, we will continue to campaign:

- by means of mass demonstrations, civil disobedience and obstruction of the "war effort";
- by means of boycotts of the state and corporate institutions of the perpetrators and supporters of this war;
- by campaigning for strikes in workplaces, schools and colleges.)

and along with about 100 others who agreed with us, named a day of direct action against the war for DEC 7th, 2002. we have set up an international network of direct action, so if you would like to join the INDA egroup, get in contact (info@worldrevolution.org.uk).

this action plan was a part of a larger resolution to the european social movement conference. we gained a lot of support from many activists who want to take an anti-imperialist stance against the war.

PERSECUTION OF ACTIVISTS

As the success of the European social forum filtered through to the worldwide audience it was followed by the news of the arrests and treatment of activists. The Anti-Capitalist activists and critics of the Berlusconi government have been subjected to enormous repression since protests against the G8-summit took place in Genoa in 2001. The killing of Carlo Giuliani, a young demonstrator, and the raid on the Diaz school in Genoa only marked the continuation of persecution towards activists throughout the world.

A week after the European Social Forum in Florence, ending with a peaceful march of some one million people, 20 assumed "heads" of the Italian anti-globalisation movement were arrested on November 15th, charged with "subversive propaganda" and conspiracy against the state and its economic constitution, based on the accusation that they had founded an organisation called "sud ribelle". The arrest warrants issued, lack decent evidence and show many inconsistencies. The "conspiracy act", created during the fascist era, however, does not require clear evidence: mere intention will be sufficient as a legal base for a conviction of the globalisation critics.

The activists were accused of belonging to a subversive network that has conspired to undermine law and order by organising protests like the march in Genoa last year during a G8 summit, when a demonstrator was killed and hundreds injured in explosive street clashes between protesters and police. Police pounced on the suspects in night raids across southern Italy. Among those detained was Francesco Caruso, one of the organisers of a peace march in Florence last week which drew more than half a million demonstrators.

Friday's early-morning arrests spurred protests from Bologna to Rome and Naples with participants expressing outrage that many of those who had organised Florence's peaceful march were now being hauled into jail. Human rights groups, local religious leaders and centre-left politicians denounced what they called the "repressive" and "Fascist" police action. "They are trying to criminalise the movement," said Luca Casarini, one of the leaders of the disobedientes in Naples. "We're not the ones who subvert the state of law - they do with their violence."

a collaboration by lima and james

NEWS FLASH: due to the mass protests in Italy and around the globe, all 20 prisoners have been released!

no sweat! update

MARCH 8TH INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY - ESF CALLS AN INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ACTION AGAINST SWEATSHOP LABOUR

We have just recovered here at No Sweat from the stupendous European Social Forum in Florence Italy, a gathering of activists from every strand and stripe of the anti-globalisation and antiwar movement



esf.org). It was an amazing experience, as i'm sure anyone else who was there will agree.

THE NO SWEAT SEMINAR

No Sweat UK hosted a seminar "The Workers Strike Back: Challenging the Sweatshop Brands" which was a great suc-

cess with about 250 attending in total. The speakers included Noel Beasley from the UNITE! trade union and Maddy Elfenbein, an activist from *United Students Against Sweatshops* - both organisations are major participants in the anti-sweatshop movement in the USA that inspired us to start organising against sweatshops in the first place. From the UK Andy Yorke spoke from the campaign *No Sweat!* and Nick Dearden from the NGO *War on Want*, which supports unions in countries like Colombia and Bangladesh.

cess with about 250 attending in total.

Lek Yimprasert from the *Thai Labour Campaign* also spoke about their organis-

A Letter from ARGENTINA

Before I start describing our situation, I wanna get some things straight. I live in a country where we complain about a government that is nothing more than a reflection of ourselves. Corruption and deceit is in all of us, it comes out naturally for some bloody reason. Probably cuz we feel like this is the way it works, we feel like this is a war where if u don't fuck someone over you're gonna be fucked up! I also live in a country that only gathers once every 4 years when the World Cup comes up or when it comes to our own money. But, if there are kids dying or no medicine for sick people, we don't really care! As long as it doesn't involve us personally, why should we give a fuck? Well, that's the way most people think.

The situation here is absolutely sad. We really can't understand what happened. You wake up one day, all the money you saved and put in a bank account is gone, your father's been kidnapped (oh! cause it's not like they kidnap rich people, they take whoever is in their way!), your son won't be able to go to school cause as soon as he can speak he's gonna have to start

working, you've been robbed about three thousand times, getting a job it's called a "miracle", and the fucking IMF pretends to "help" us and is instead digging our own grave -- no! they are not that nice!!!! they are making us dig our own grave.

I'll tell you our latest story and then I'm off, cuz I'm getting depressed. In Tucumán, one of our provinces, 4 out of 5 kids don't get enough food to stay alive, so apparently an American journalist (can't remember the name of the magazine now, but it's a very well known one) went there. When he saw all the misery that these people had to put up with, he decided to make a donation and he put all the food and medicine in a big truck. Absolutely every single medicine was out of date as well as the food, the stretchers for hospitals had blood on them, and basically everything was useless. So then, he wrote an article bitching about us cause we were complaining about it. What do you think about that? Are we some sort of species that can't get aids and eat fag butts?

I don't fucking think so.



ing efforts in Thailand under difficult situations, where globalisation plays off workers from different countries to lower their wages, and about what she thought the movement in the US and Europe should be doing to help. The Clean Clothes Campaign Europe also spoke from the floor about their campaigning efforts.

The seminar was about more than just talking - we discussed how we can most effectively work together as a network and bring the struggle against sweatshop exploitation forward. From this seminar came the call for an international day of action on march 8th, international women's day, which went to the ESF and is now an official Europe-wide day of action!

Sweatshop labour has a special significance for women around the world since it is mostly women that are forced to work in these harsh factory conditions. Besides the forced overtime and starvation pay that all workers face, women workers are further oppressed specifically due to their sex.

Many face forced pregnancy tests, receive no maternity pay, or even get sacked if they are found to be pregnant. Sexual harassment is rampant and humiliating practices are still common,

such as the "menstruation test" in Indonesian factories where women workers are still forced to pull down their underwear to prove they are menstruating if they want to leave work. In Mexico and other countries women organisers in the sweatshops are "disappeared", raped and murdered.

We want to reclaim international women's day as a day of struggle in the labour movement across the continents. Therefore we appeal to all anti-sweatshop and workers' rights organisations, women's organisations, trade unions, NGO's, human rights campaigns, and other interested campaigns to create a network of action and come together on this day in your own cities and countries to create a prominent wave of world-wide protest.

Sweatshop exploitation is already on the map of Europe, but hidden away in workshops in the poor immigrant districts of our cities, or overseas in the developing countries. Let's make it visible and put the anti-sweatshop movement on the map as well!

IF YOUR ORGANISATION WOULD LIKE TO TAKE PART IN ORGANISING AND SPONSORING THIS INTERNATIONAL DAY OF ACTION, GET IN TOUCH.
info@nosweat-uk.org

MADE UNDER WORKERS CONTROL

One year of the occupation of the Zanon ceramic factory in Neuquen, Argentina.



All welcome! Come and hear how the Zanon workers have fought back to save their jobs by taking over their factory and running it for themselves

THURS 12th DEC

7.30pm

Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, (Holborn Tube),

ACTION!

Thursday Dec 12th London: UNITE! teams up with No Sweat! and other campaigns fighting exploitation (plus a few elves) to give the scrooge CEO's of PPR a SPECIAL holiday cheer.

French multinational Pinault-Printemps-Redoute is one of the largest retailers and distribution firms in the world, owning catalogue companies through to Gucci and Yves St. Laurent. Operating in 65 countries, PPR profits tripled in the last 3 years, driven by its sales of 27.8 billion euros. This has made PPR's biggest shareholder, Francois Pinault, the second richest man in France.

You would think that PPR could afford to pay its workers a decent wage and ensure decent working conditions - but no, the people who produce and sell PPR's goods pay a high price for the companies success. PPR's drive for higher profits, greater dividends and inflated executive pay is directly responsible for the terrible conditions imposed on workers worldwide.

Christmas is coming and the bosses are getting FATTER... let's put a dent into their Christmas pudding.:)

Sweatshops in the area? Just Do Them with No Sweat!
www.nosweat-uk.org
0044 7951 493 232

BCM Box 7750, London WC1N 3XX

A Rise in Racism.....

The recent electoral victory for the BNP in Blackburn, combined with racist attacks and murders in places such as Sunderland and Glasgow, marks a horrifying rise in racism in Britain. Combined with the BNP victories in elections in Burnley, it shows that a rise in racist and fascist ideas is no flash in the pan. Socialists, anti-capitalists and the anti-racists movement have to take this spread of racism with the utmost seriousness.

The upsurge in support for the BNP has come out of a growing disillusionment with a Labour government, which has continued the Tory policies of attacking worker's rights and scapegoating asylum seekers. The Labour Party has condemned the right of Asian communities to defend themselves against fascist attacks, even when the police stand by and do nothing. Indeed they praised racist magistrates for handing out 4 or 5 year sentences for stone throwing, yet said nothing about the fact that fascists got away with one or two year prison sentences.

If we are to fight back against this rising tide of racism, we need to take a two pronged strategy. Firstly this means fighting back against the racist lies of the Labour government and the right-wing press (check out www.refugeecouncil.org.uk for a myth-busting fact sheet). The reality of a life of an asylum seeker who comes to Britain is having to live on just over £30 a week without any working rights. Britain ranks 12th in the EU on the number of asylum seekers it takes in and two-thirds of the world's refugees are in Africa and the Middle-East. Why are borders closed to worker's and people when borders are open to multinationals to go in, exploit and kill people all over the world?

We also have to expose the fact that a tiny percentage of the government's budget is spent on asylum seekers, while billions will be spent on a war on Iraq. Housing shortages come from decades of underinvestment in social housing, not from meeting the needs of refugees. The educational system, health service and council services are privatised and used for profit, while the government and the ruling classes use the asylum issue for cover.

While the anti-racist movement (including trade unions, anti-capitalist movement, etc) should take anti-racist education into schools, universities and workplaces, this is only half the battle. Racism is not just an idea. It is not just 'a prejudice', it is deeply entrenched in our society - it runs through some of the most powerful institutions of the State. Over the last few years the police, the prison service, the Home Office and the Crown Prosecution Service have all been successfully shown to be guilty of institutional racism. Every statistic shows how racist capitalist society is. Black men suffer from 40% unemployment rates in London, the educational system routinely give black and Asian children less opportunities, health services fail the needs of black and Asian communities, the police harass black and Asian people on the streets and the judges hand out disproportionate racist sentences. Racism is intrinsically linked to capitalist society. For this reason we have to mobilise against capitalist society and not just the idea of racism.

The anti-racist movement has to implement a No Platform policy to stop fascists like the BNP

from organising, meeting or campaigning. Organisations like the Anti-Nazi League have supported state bans on fascist but in doing this they make a big mistake. As the last year has shown, this legislation has only been used to ban anti-racist mobilisations, while the fascists have been free to do what they like - including marching through black and Asian communities. We have to organise student unions and trade unions to mobilise mass demonstrations and actions against the BNP.

To really defeat the racists we will have to combine our fight with the struggle against desperate poverty, crumbling public services and unemployment. We can't win this battle without taking on the rich bosses and their representatives in government. And that means taking on the state.

Without any delay anti-racist forces must be rallied against this upsurge in racism and fascism, and launch an attack on the propaganda of the racist Labour government and the BNP. At the same time, No Platform and mass demonstrations are needed to drive the fascists off the streets and out of our schools, universities and workplaces.

For this reason Revo recognises that we have to:

- o Root racism out of the workplace, the community and the institutions: win the power of the trade union movement to the antiracist struggle
- o Organise self-defence against racist attacks - wherever they come from, racists or even the police themselves. Asian and black communities should be supported and assisted when defending themselves against fascist and racist attacks, as the racist police force cannot be relied upon. Subsequent victimisation in the courts should be fought against and defence campaigns built up and supported. We should call for all charges to be dropped
- o Tear down the borders and let people travel freely
- o Smash the BNP and NF
- o Cancel Third World Debt
- o Unite all the peoples of the planet in the fight against global capitalism

by dan in
brixton



BNP IN SUNDERLAND



Towards the end of August Payman Bahmani, an Iranian asylum seeker, was stabbed to death by a young white male in the Hendon area of Sunderland. As yet, the events of

the night are unclear. Some say that the attack was racially motivated, others say the result of a personal feud. Until the truth becomes certain, one thing that can't be denied is the influence of the British National Party (BNP) in the area. Within days of the murder, Sunderland saw violent clashes between asians and whites, stirred up by a mass leafletting campaign by the fascists. The leaflet demanded to know why - out of a street fight involving eight people - the four arrests that were made were all white.

By claiming "anti-white" discrimination, the BNP are dividing and provoking the two already alienated communities. The BNP preys on the developing tensions in Sunderland - and in particular Hendon - as communities are forced to scramble for the scarce resources in the economically depressed area. Last year in the local elections, the BNP received 28 percent of the votes, compared to the 2 percent that they gained in the previous election.

In reaction to the leaflets, the anti-nazi league quickly responded with counter propaganda campaign of their own. The speed in which they did this is certainly admirable, but perhaps we need to start thinking about more than just responding to BNP activity, as and when it happens. We should think about what the communities need and how best this can be achieved by working together.

We still have the advantage that WE are the majority. If we want to defeat the fascists, a united front should mean exactly that - with activists, trade-unions, workers and students alike - joining the asian and black communities to build a wall of defiance in their defence against the nazis.

by missi in sunderland

THE 'WAR ON TOURISTS'

that's what Bush said didn't he?
you're either with us on the
beach or you're against us. you're
either in the water or out?



REVO
Berlin

As 15 bodies lay in the smouldering ruins of the Paradise Hotel near Mombassa, Kenya, the US led 'War on Terror' received a fresh boost. The previously unknown Army Of Palestine, possibly part of Bin Laden's Al Qaida network, claimed responsibility for the attack on the Israeli-owned hotel complex, and also the failed attempt to shoot down a passenger jet with rockets on the same day.

Right away the press was hysterical saying that 'Jews' (not Israelis) every-

where should fear for their safety, making no connection between this act and the Israeli state sanctioned terrorism of the Palestinian people.

Immediately, Israeli premier Ariel Sharon seized on the opportunity to place Israel alongside the US and UK, vowing to hunt down the attackers. More worryingly he will now use the fig leaf of the 'War on Terror' to justify further repression and war crimes against the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories.

Most people around the world are horrified at these attacks and realise that nothing progressive can be gained through targeting civilians like this. Earlier this year the Bali bombing outraged millions by targeting partying backpackers on the holiday island.

Meistra of Revolution Indonesia sent us the following report on the aftermath of the attack and the implications for the Indonesian people.

by kuldip in clapham

we in revo indonesia want express our profound sorrow about the tragedy of the bali bomb.

the bomb in bali on october 12, 2002 gave a surprise blow to the

world and especially indonesia. it was unbelievable that the bali island be the sight of such terror: 189 people died, many people injured and destroyed buildings all around. That the sari night-club, an entertainment place for international tourists, was the target for the terrorist attack is hard to believe. i didn't know what the purpose of this attack was, but it has pushed the indonesian country into a multidimensional crisis. the indonesian image in the eyes world is very bad. the megawati government just quiet and powerless, and the situation for the people is very bad because it is difficult to get even the basic requirements. the student movement still struggles for justice within the context of this tragedy.

many speculate about the meaning of this tragedy. even in the indonesian government there is a differing of opinions about the origins of the bomb. some say that this tragedy has been orchestrated by al qaida and the other version is that this tragedy is another international conspiracy, while the vice president continues to say that we don't have terrorists in indonesia. not clear exactly whose group was involved, but this tragedy

has some relationship with the suharto group.

the executor is the army in indonesia because they have known about the ticking timebomb in indonesian politics. the tragedy in bali is made by the army who has teamed up with the usa to legalise their army activity and carry out a coup d'etat in our country by joining the 'war on terrorism'. this scenario will destabilise indonesia and will be used to kill any civil movement who is anti-imperialist and anti-oppression. now the indonesia government has passed anti-terrorist legislation. this legislation will legitimise the army/suharto group, and allow them to trample on human rights and bring them back to power.

now with the bali tragedy, the result is civil unrest. the student movement always resists the state which is unfair to the people. there will be big clashes in indonesia.

to bush and blair: we will not participate in a war against terrorism. This war on terrorism is a front: you use it as an excuse to attack iraq, yet you turn a blind eye as sharon destroys palestine. this is an terrorist action, isn't it? we are being used as the guard of the capitalist economy by imperialist ways.

to the all young people in the world, we need to close ranks as pioneers of revolution and take on the governments. We must provide an alternative to the government, to the state, to the system!

by Meistra (revo indonesia)

DEC 1st World AIDs Day: a few facts

HIV has not gone away in the UK. There is an alarming increase – new cases have gone up 25% to 4000 each year. Better treatment means that people are living longer, so the total number of people living with HIV is now 41 000. Most new cases are now in heterosexuals, mainly acquired in Africa and Asia. Among people born in the UK it is still gay men who are most vulnerable. The current increase in HIV is linked to a resurgence of the "old fashioned" sexually transmitted infections. Syphilis has quadrupled in recent years. In response moral crusades against sex will flourish, but what we really need is better education in schools, an open and positive attitude to sex, much more condom use and a massive investment in better services.

